

Richard Weaver Against the Establishment*

AN ESSAY REVIEW

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I

IN the late 1920's T. S. Eliot wrote that "there is no such thing as a Lost Cause because there is no such thing as Gained Cause. We fight for lost causes because we know that our defeat and dismay may be the preface to our successors' victory, though that victory itself will be temporary; we fight rather to keep something alive than in the expectation that anything will triumph." At that time Richard Weaver was a very young man, generally ignorant of causes lost or gained. In 1932 he joined the American Socialist Party, caught up in the general sweep of sympathy for abstract social good which was growing out of grave economic realities. He thus embarked upon a disillusionment which led him to a revolt against the "establishment," at that juncture of our history called the New Deal. Within the decade he set about his own re-education because of disillusionment—"at the age of thirty," an age considered terminal by our young revolutionaries.

Richard Weaver's revolt was not in consort, nor spectacular (in Aristotle's sense of the term so appropriate to the modern scene), though on the surface it was highly mobile. Having graduated from the University of Kentucky, studied at Vanderbilt, taught in Texas, he entered graduate school at Louisiana State University, spending summers at the Sorbonne, Harvard, and the University of Virginia before settling more or less permanently at the University of Chicago. He was engaged in rooting out what he calls (in *Ideas Have Consequences*) those vague influences on his education stemming from the "stultifying 'Whig' theory of history, with its bland assumption that every cause which has won deserved to win." It led him to see that his chief adversary was the American educational system, which failed to train the intellect to make fundamental distinctions. That is, he committed himself to the principle that ideas do have consequences

**The Southern Tradition at Bay: A History of Postbellum Thought*. By Richard M. Weaver. Foreword by Donald Davidson. Edited by George Core and M. E. Bradford. New Rochelle, New York: Arlington House, 1968. 422 pp. \$7.00

in the affairs of man and that, consequently, bad ideas have bad consequences. He entered the academic world. In this sense he joined battle against a triumphant educational system on its own grounds, maintaining that it is (in the modern jargon) "irrelevant" to fundamental principles of humanity. His choice is a comment on his courage and sets him in contrast to some of his contemporaries who shared his conviction that many causes of the failure of American civilization may be laid at the door of the American academy. One thinks particularly of Ezra Pound, who conducted his guerilla warfare from the continent, and of T. S. Eliot, who joined battle from the removed cliffs of London.

Weaver's belated education led him to conclude that to study a lost cause has "some effect of turning history into philosophy." It is a point central to Jack Burden's similar pursuit, which Robert Penn Warren was expanding at approximately the same time Weaver undertook his study, and with Louisiana State University as a point of departure also. The result for Weaver was not that he narrated the influence of history in a novel, nor rescued and revitalized history with the immediacy Pound sometimes manages in the *Cantos*, nor dramatized the tragedy of loss and the mystery of spiritual recovery as Eliot does in the body of his poetry. He analyzed, rationalized (in the oldest sense of the word), and expounded a tradition he considered of vital consequence to the survival of Western civilization. That is, he wrote *The Southern Tradition at Bay*, the foundation upon which the larger and better-known body of his work rests. It is a study which illuminates the Southern Literary Renaissance as very few have managed to do, but it also makes understandable, from home grounds, the Americanism of such concerned minds as Eliot and Pound.

Specifically, *The Southern Tradition at Bay* grows out of Weaver's prodigious reading of "first-hand accounts by those who had actually borne the brunt as soldiers and civilians" in the South between Appomattox and the year of Weaver's birth, 1910. The book therefore reaches back into time and place, emphasizing the importance of what Weaver calls "particularism"—that concrete multiplicity of the world of mind and nature requiring careful distinction as vital to the pleasures of abstraction. Weaver, in his study, discovered principles out of the individual's involvement in the local scene that Pound discovered codified in Confucianism, that great learning "rooted in watching with affection the way people grow," as Confucius put it, the completion

of which knowledge is "rooted in sorting things into organic categories." Weaver's procedure in recovering the principles affecting the mind and the blood, the body and soul, are more arduous, finally, than Pound's, but more organic as well. For one thing, it required his reading with attention a great deal of very poor writing—aesthetically, polemically, philosophically inferior. But there is compensation. His understanding is more inclusive as a result, for his idea of the traditional does not isolate the desirable; the desirable is highlighted in contrast. Weaver is constantly aware that tradition is a continuous presence of both the desirable and undesirable. His mind, rooted in organic categories, is finally closer metaphorically to Yeats's great rooted blossomer than to Pound's mind with its selected fruits, the anthologist aspect of Pound's work that so troubles one's reading of him.

The distinction is of such fundamental importance that it is worth further pursuit. It seems to me that Weaver understood more fully than such a traditionalist as Pound that the organic metaphor for the continuity of society depends more heavily upon the limitations of time and place than Pound was able to admit. It allows Weaver to be aware continuously, but not hysterically, of both old dead feeder roots and today's dying leaves, of both the healthy and the erratic buds and blossoms. For instance, it makes Weaver capable of seeing the distorted truth in the position of a whole school of poets, sociologists, politicians, for which William Carlos Williams affirmed a doctrine when he asserted "No ideas but in things." Yet he is not so late in coming to terms with nature—the natural world and human nature—as Eliot. Neither do we have in Weaver the pathos of Pound's final fragments

From time's wreckage shored,
these fragments shored against ruin.

There Pound's insistence of wholeness—"I, one thing, as relation to one thing"—is uncomfortably stated as if the wholeness is feared an illusion out of Whitman. The Confucian still point not realized, Pound is left with that old nineteenth-century romantic malady of knowing "beauty and death and despair," thinking "that what has been shall be,/flowing, ever unstill" for "The Gods have not returned."

Weaver sensed, and finally understood and accepted as fundamental to society a principle likewise sensed and accepted, but not sufficiently

understood and acted upon in the South generally. A Confucian teaching from the *Great Digest* says it succinctly: ". . . the real man perfects the nation's culture without leaving his fireside." He also was aware that the mind as an agent of being, operating from that fireside, is severely limited, as poets quite often fail to acknowledge sufficiently. For while the discursive intellect probes being, it cannot finally encompass it. The process is illusional if one fail to admit that the mind's process is a discontinuous probing of being whose analogy (simplified for clarifying my point) may be the film. A succession of frames will give the illusion of continuous motion, all aspects of which the viewer seems to have grasped; a succession of ideas and images gives the mind an illusion of having grasped being. But being is always leaking out of the jointures of syllogism or analogy or metaphor. One defines essence, but definition does not comprehend. Mystery leaks in where being leaks out, which is why to poet and philosopher alike the ancient mystery of man's being created in the image of God (Perfect Being) has become of such importance in this century. To insist that there are no ideas but in things is ultimately to deny the mind's existence, to deny also all distinction; and to lament the failure of the Gods to return is to acknowledge hollowness and hunger of the mind. To invite the mystery of Grace into the mind, as Eliot does in the *Quartets*, is to reject denial and despair in a gesture, "a condition of complete simplicity/ (Costing not less than everything)" as Eliot says. In a word then, Weaver out of his hard-mindedness insists upon the old virtue of humility, which recognizes the mind's limitations. It is inevitable as well that in the details of his historical particulars there is much attention to Southern arrogance as well as a special emphasis upon the religious inclination of the Southerner as an influence upon his developing history.

The ideas Weaver pursues in his book finally ally him with such eminent contemporaries as Eric Voeglin and Leo Strauss, and with those other minds pursuing the timeless, the poets. But the book speaks more immediately. One reads it in conjunction with George M. Fredrickson's *The Inner Civil War: Northern Intellectuals and the Crisis of the Union*. One reads it with profit along with such a variety of alarms and excursions as Ralph E. Lapp's *The New Priesthood: the Scientific Elite and the Uses of Power*, Robert Ardrey's *African Genesis and Territorial Imperative*, Lionel Tiger's *Men in Groups*, Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, Eric Hoffer's engaging and disturbing

reflections on the state of American civilization, Gore Vidal's happy, ignorant welcoming of 1984, *Reflections on a Sinking Ship*. The list can be extended. It is upon the immediate relevance of Weaver's book, then, that I shall concentrate, leaving to a more distant future its continuing relevance to a larger climate of ideas.

II

With the proper distinctions, and with that sense of irony always appropriate to principles seen in their historical manifestations, one may discover in Weaver's book something of the kinship between his personal concerns as a young Southerner and the impulses of some of the more militant of our disaffected youth, those in particular who swell the crowds under the leadership of the doctrinaire anarchists of the SDS and related cadres of chaos.* For what many of our young protestors lack is not a cause, as their antagonists rather desperately acknowledge in public confessions of guilt that would make a Southern evangelist envious of the young radicals. They lack a knowledge of its particulars—most importantly the principles which must ultimately justify or condemn causes. It is that absence of knowledge in them which makes them sacrifices in a lost cause, struggling against what Weaver calls our monolithic state become “rigid with fear that it has lost control of its destiny.”

Those of our separated youth who finally refuse to abandon the gift of mind will come to consider whether Richard Weaver does not express arguments more relevant to their sentiments than those of Thoreau or Bob Dylan. For Weaver is bent upon rescuing and maintaining the eminence of *being* over *doing*, a distinction ancient but neglected which goes to the heart of our current troubles. Sadly enough, neither church nor state—of old constructed upon such distinctions—addresses the distinction persuasively. “Literalism,” Weaver says, “is the materialism of religion.” It is an inevitable stance of the modern public mind, developed out of a climate of thought in which

*There were sentiments expressed by some of those caught up in the Chicago embroilment of the summer of 1968 that seemed to me at the time to indicate an affinity with Agrarian arguments of forty years ago which Weaver is sympathetic to. Compare, for instance, Morris Kight's words explaining why he showed up for the happening. He had sold his seven hotels to take up a new life, arguing at Chicago that the machinery of industrialism must be made “to work for man, not against him. Let them make it possible for man to return to the soil. Make them clear the air, rather than foul it” (*National Review*, September 24, 1969, p. 499). Shades of *I'll Take My Stand*. And if only someone could have handed out copies of Donald Davidson's *Attack on Leviathan*.

doing assumes precedence, whether church or government program or massed opposition to those programs. And since *doing* is necessarily prescribed by the temporal world, when it is given precedence the things of the world inevitably define the essence of human existence and human virtues become anchored in a materialist climate of thought. Thus solutions are in terms of moneyed programs on the one hand, in terms of destroyed property on the other. Surely our nation's current chaos may be understood to some extent within this context. For what we are experiencing is the acceleration of a trend centuries old: a continuous schism in the secular world over its basic doctrine of *doing*. In our country one can trace it in the decay of Puritanism and Transcendentalism into Pragmatism. The intellectual history of Emerson is informative on this point, as well as the disturbing fiction of Hawthorne. More broadly, one can discover the lines of its descent into Sartrian doing for the sake of existence. (It is of interest that the straight-faced clown and first-called saint of existentialism, Jean Genet, covered the Chicago convention as an activist reporter.) A more immediately dangerous manifestation is the struggle of Herbert Marcuse and his followers with the "establishment" as they define it. In that blind struggle, the attempt is to control the sources of power which reside in human numbers and natural and industrial resources. Here literalism is the one-dimensional measure of human existence, whether it speak on the one side of social rehabilitation in terms of material identity or on the other of ABM protection for the things of the world, including population. For literalism is not only what Weaver says of it, the materialism of religion, but the source of secular piety. It means inevitably the death of the imagination and the rejection of wonder and mystery.

A symptom of our ignorant condition which makes my point is the general absence of humor in the New Left Marcusian, in Sartre, in their precursors, no less than in the minions of the state and church they confront. The Absurd each posits is not the modern discovery it is taken to be. In the West its presence is celebrated as anciently as the humor of Homer and the tragedy of Euripides and his fathers. The civilized man, who possesses what Eliot calls the classical mind, carries a knowledge of the complexities of human existence and expresses it through a sense of humor and its complement, a sense of tragedy. In his essay "Aspects of Southern Philosophy" Weaver, in defining a difference between the Southerner with his historical awareness of the

human comedy and his Northern counterpart who generally lacks it, says the Southerner "has had to face what the existentialists call 'ultimate situations' and has come through. . . ." He brings with him a "belief in tragedy . . . essentially un-American; it is in fact one of the heresies against Americanism." His inability to respond effectively, because overwhelmed by force, leads him to humor's saving virtues. Weaver has specifically in mind both the Civil War and Reconstruction. Of the war itself he says, in *The Southern Tradition at Bay*, in speaking of the policy of Sherman and Sheridan, ". . . there remains considerable foundation for the assertion that the United States is the first government in modern times to commit itself to the policy of unlimited aggression."^{*} It is a statement about our government generally popular out of the South since the Vietnam War. Yet one will find more Southerners defending our role in that war on principle than not. They do so for reasons Weaver makes understandable: the South is still committed in large to the premise that communism, being atheistic, is demonic. The triumph of what the South believed a materialistic and irreligious enemy in 1865 made it more unwavering in its opposition to that enemy, whatever form he assumed, even in defeat, as the post war apologists make clear. The epithets against such an aggressor, whether simplified to "Yankee" or "Puritan" in those post-bellum days or "liberal" or "leftist" in our day, have source in the old Southern commitment as God's custodians of society and nature, a commitment far greater than the clownish antics of their position, so easily cartooned, allow an external public to suppose. The typical Southerner, for instance, worries less about the economic cost of the war than about its righteous cause. (He is more angry about the economics of domestic policy.) He feels more strongly that victory is a moral imperative, that political compromise is dangerous. For to compromise with "communism" is to him in some wise to bargain with the devil. As Weaver points out in his essay "Aspects of the Southern Philosophy," the South, out of a memory of the possibilities of defeat, "has remained the most militarily inclined of the sections." (Thus it was the South, through its Congressmen, that "swung the vote for renewal of conscription in 1941.")

Weaver contends, persuasively, that it is the South which has managed

*Andrew Lytle expands this argument in his introduction to the second edition of his biography of Nathan Bedford Forrest. See also Lytle's "A Hero and the Doctrinaires of Defeat" in the *Georgia Review*, X (Winter, 1956), 4.

to preserve certain dimensions upon human existence for which our world is blindly hungry. For the South, he says emphatically, was "*the last non-materialist civilization in the Western World.*" His book is no encomium. He concludes finally that the South failed its highest responsibility, though it still "possesses an inheritance which it has imperfectly understood and little used. It is in the curious position of having been right without realizing the grounds of its rightness." Its most catastrophic failure, Weaver believes, was in not studying its position "until it arrived at metaphysical foundations." The weaknesses of righteous arrogance and complacency, with a failure to encourage the development of the mind except through training in law, preceded the exigencies of those years between 1840 and 1865 and accompanied them to Appomattox. The defeat of a righteous cause by force of arms proved so traumatic as to focus attention upon the loss, with the cause itself defended vigorously and eloquently, but still without the necessary metaphysical basis from which alone, in Weaver's view, a defense could have been effectively persuasive. Energies spent in justifying its actions, energy spent in surviving the aftermath of defeat, wasted slowly into the province of nostalgia and romance, so that by the turn of the century the South's "people suffered from intellectual stagnation." A generation gap at that point of its history was particularly obvious, as Weaver shows, with the young in pursuit of a new world opened by science and technology. "The ultraconservative Southerner, who worshipped the South in its crystallized form, was as much at fault [for the stagnation] as the devotee of 'progress,' who turned his back upon history and thinks of the past as so much error." The inevitable effects of the mutual failure were predicted by some lingering members of the old order, speaking to their own disaffected sons, as we shall presently see, sons who seemingly heard not a word. We observe that, ironically enough, those sons are the fathers of our world against whom we witness the revolt of our own sons today.

In pointing to the eminence of *being* over *doing* as manifest in the early history of the South, Weaver argues that inheritance as being implicitly out of Aristotle and Aquinas, though rarely articulated from its intellectual sources in Southern literature. Law, not philosophy, was the calling of the gentleman, and Cicero's orations were venerated while the *Ethics* and *Summa Theologia* were neglected. Still, the general assumption of the pre-eminence of being is evidenced, and so ordered

by Weaver's presentation that it cannot be ignored as an attribute of the influential minds in the early South. The timeliness of one of his conclusions is evident also: "Unlike the technician of the present day, the typical Southerner did not feel that he must do a thing because he found he could do it." The phrase "do a thing" anticipates the current shibboleth on everyone's lips since Weaver's death in 1963; for one to "do his thing" is for one to deliberately distort technological specialization, its vocabulary in particular, in the interest of *being over doing*.

III

Where Weaver would seem to part company with our unhappy youth, and where the South itself appears repulsive to them and they generally to it, is on the question of the meaning of and necessity for order in society. But it does not follow that Weaver, in the name of order, accepts the "establishment." He sees rather that the necessity for order is not finally obviated by the perversions of order, whether manifest in bureaucratic machinery or the personal abuses of power. Weaver argues the necessity of order in the affairs of man, an order he finds undercut by the modern world's denial of those natural bounds which impose hierarchy upon society willy-nilly by the fact of existence itself. That is, he moves away from that insistence on absolute freedom which grew out of a secular reading of nature when social science came to dominate society after New England theology prepared the way. "A classless society," Weaver says, "is invertebrate." Indeed, the experiments out of Lenin down to the current turmoils in China, added to the general history of society—primitive and civilized—rather suggest class as a presumption of that earth-bound organism called society. The argument over hierarchy reduces finally, not to whether there shall be class distinctions, but to the principles upon which procedures and precedence are to be established. When all is said, the struggle between the Marcusians and the technologists of the establishment is over the definition of the elite. The question is how shall power be organized. For the organism called society has power (which is not in itself evil) to the extent that it has moved analogically from jellyfish toward vertebrate existence.

Weaver's concern for class in society is out of the tradition of Aristotle and Aquinas. He sees a desirable unity in the undeniable diversity as possible only where diversity is both recognized and

cherished. But more importantly, he sees diversity as a legitimate determinant of place in civilized society, whose necessary referent is not efficiency (the technological concern whether capitalist or communist in politics) nor inheritance (the assumed prerogatives of whatever species of decayed aristocracy). The determinant is *being* itself. Weaver's version of order in society then is divorced of the several versions which deny spiritual dimensions or pay only rhetorical homage to them, since he does not confuse temporal ends with ultimate ends. He does not, that is, confuse the ultimate value of the individual being with the social or sociological position the individual occupies by accident, grace, or industry. Weaver's argument for social order is one discoverable in a logical projection in Aquinas and in an imaginative one in Dante. (See, on this specific point, Canto XIII of the *Paradise*.) It is therefore not surprising to hear him say of its possible recovery to the world, after the South's failure to establish a defensible metaphysical justification, that "Barring the advent of an illumination by some fateful personality, the task falls upon poets, artists, intellectuals, upon workers in the timeless."

Order, one concludes from Weaver's arguments, is fundamentally personal and humane; it sees individual differences in character, temperament, talent, and intellect as necessitating community, in which individual limitations are complemented by individual strengths to the common good. He is interested in the possibility of civilization as influenced by the hierarchy within the family, within the community, within town, borough, or county—those political entities born of a conjunction of families in community. The sense of social and political place in community is, to Weaver, properly allied to one's sense of geographic place, in which there is a mystical relationship of man to that natural world lying immediately at hand, a matter of paramount importance to the Southern mind which Weaver adumbrates. Place, such a Southerner believes, feeds a hunger in every man, regardless of social or political estate, a point Weaver illustrates profusely from the literature of the South before 1910. One may demonstrate the same point out of much greater Southern literature than Weaver uses in his limited span, and in literature which the South finds congenial. For place is of fundamental moral importance from Odysseus' concern for Ithaca to Sutpen's concern for his One Hundred. Its aesthetic and moral importance troubled Hawthorne, James, Joyce. Conrad expresses envy of Hardy's advantage with the English shire. Ezra Pound ful-

minates against geography as having little literary importance, but he also insists upon the necessity of local gods to literature.*

The saving sense of place, Weaver argues, imposes upon a man a "sense of trusteeship" which ultimately leads to moral engagement, whether that engagement be limited to cabin or plantation. Place is, indeed, a corollary to community for the individual person. For as the soul is related to the body, so is community to place. The inverted Platonism of the modern world (in a word, Manichean) is precisely that its materialistic desires require a dissociation from the particulars of the natural world. Materialism is in its worst form a technological abstraction of nature in which nature is coldly violated. Streams mean ergs and trees translate to board feet. The inordinate and grotesque result as manifest to us is the City of Man, whose problems are multiplied by the attempt to deal with them on the same principles that created them in the first place.**

The world being always with us, a particular place in that world inevitably carries dangers: in maintaining a responsibility as trustee in nature, man tends to develop "arbitrary, self-willed, and dictatorial" traits. The quoted phrase was specifically applied to Mississippi planters by an observer in the nineteenth century. But when one reflects upon the revolt of the 1960's—our civil war divorced of place and directed

*Two interesting points of comparison are in order. First, we may contrast Weaver's concern for the local as the point from which civilization is to be rebuilt with Herbert Marcuse's concern for the local as the point where the last vestiges of Western civilization are to be destroyed. The militant nihilists to whom Marcuse speaks are urged to "envisege . . . some kind of diffuse and dispersed disintegration of the system, in which interest, emphasis and activity is shifted to local and regional areas" (IT/54, April 11-24, 1964). Secondly, in spite of the close parallels in Pound's Confucian sense of order, it is the ultimate effect of self-order through ordered family, to the well ordered state that commands Pound's attention. Pound would make Confucius spokesman to the modern statesman as Machiavelli was to the Renaissance statesman. Pound's teleological concern is the ordered state constituted of ordered individuals. "The men of old wanting to clarify and diffuse through the empire that light which comes from looking straight into the heart and then acting, first set up good government," says Confucius. Pound, defending Confucianism against the charge that it has no metaphysics, summarizes: "Metaphysics: Only the most absolute sincerity under heaven can effect any change." Pound, finally, has an innocent faith in the perfectibility of man through the perfectibility of a few men who perfect the state. It is not only perfection in nature, but natural perfection of man's mind, an ideal the obverse of D. H. Lawrence's "blood knowledge."

**A nation whose population is overwhelmingly concentrated on less than 10 per cent of its land is at last asking whether *rural* development may not be more beneficial to our soul sickness than urban development, whose principal effect seems so far to have been to make the slum mobile within the metropolis, at prodigious economic and social cost.

against system as represented by parent, college, and all institutions of government—he finds current vitality in the old epithets, though their form be comparatively mild. The conclusion is that the evil is not a necessary consequence of place, since it has flourished when society and government are largely divorced of place. The suspicion arises that evil may be in man, which to Weaver's Southerner is not a suspicion but a fact of human nature.

Parent, college, congress: symbols of familial, intellectual, political hierarchy. To our revolutionaries, symbols of false institutions. But their feeling of betrayal, their charges of hypocrisy directed against the "establishment" in its several manifestations, one might have expected. Southern apologists very soon after 1865 began to predict just the sort of turmoil we currently enjoy. For many of them believed that, when egalitarianism is elevated to the status of a secular religion but with the hidden object the part of the elevators of consolidating political power, a hidden hierarchy must inevitably, if slowly, reveal itself. Between that new power structure's real nature and its public sentiments the gulf would widen. The credibility gap of recent notoriety is an illustration of the disparity anticipated. Hypocrisy appears even in such secular religions as egalitarianism, but then so does self-deception when sentiment overwhelms thought. Thus it was predictable that the inevitable effect of the strategem of absolute equality would be that number replace the name; the machine dictates a sequential relationship of number to number: the abstract configuration of person—his voting or technical value—becomes the hierarchy.* When in the interest of continuation of that system gluttony, avarice, and envy are elevated to virtues in order to move consumer goods or shift political power the corruptions of spirit are eventually self-revealing. Consider the

*Marcuse argues that the mass power base, the workers, is no longer simply the exploited, for which reason the anarchists can hardly depend upon him (except in France, where ironically the *tradition* of anarchy is venerable). Affluent, the working class incorporates "highly qualified salaried employees, technicians, specialists . . ." They occupy "a decisive position in the material process of production." One may attempt to argue them exploited, as Marcuse does, but limited as he is to materialist concepts, he will hardly convince them.

catechisms, exemplums, testimonials of the advertising world alongside their counterparts in the political and social world in the ascendancy.*

Life threshes for survival, but it is increasingly apparent that it is a spiritual life that struggles in unexpected ways and in strange places in our placeless society. In the midst of and out of material affluence, there is a desperate attempt by some of the young to reject materialism, a clutching at such straws as Zen Buddhism, drugs. These signs an older generation tends to read poorly, missing for instance the possible relevance of the studied physical dirtiness to the advertising pitch on the moral plane which tries to sell soap and deodorants as the first step toward salvation. As I write there is in the local news a confrontation of the South. Elements of the local "establishment" and the disaffected young are involved as if in a spontaneous allegorical masque. In a Georgia county adjacent to Athens—"Advancing Athens" the promotion says—a sheriff raided what he and the newspapers called a 'Hippie Haven.' The landlady is none other than ex-congress-woman Jeanette Rankin, who opposed entry into both World Wars on pacifist grounds. The sheriff seized marijuana, but it was the "collection of weird things" that fascinated him, including strange posters that read ". . . is alive and well inside himself" and "Only four more voting days till 1984." There were psychedelic colors on walls. An assortment of deodorants, auto parts, guitars, Bob Dylan records, a book by Eldridge Cleaver. The newspaper reporter who covered the raid, and whose paper publishes embarrassingly sophomoric front-page cartoons to cheer on the football team, reacts to that collection of weird things: "Outlandish, way-out posters and stickers plastered the walls," psychedelic colors "prevailed in virtually every room." The sheriff sees no pattern in the queer collection of persons and things. The reporter cannot distinguish between the violation of Federal drug statutes and poor taste in decor. A long-haired youth, driving an "expensive motorcycle" appeared on the scene, explaining, "I use this place to sort of get away." The

*In "Aspects of the Southern Philosophy," Weaver attributes to the Southern people a "comparative absence of that modern spirit of envy." It is traditional, in part accounting for "the fact that three fourths of the soldiers of the Confederate armies owned no slaves and never expected to own any. . ." Not, says Weaver, that the Southerner will not take a better job or pass up a chance to make a quick fortune or "that he will not admire material success. . . What I do affirm is that it is not in his character to hate another man because that man has a great deal more of the world's goods. . . He is not now and never has been a leveler. . . The modern impulse which elevates envy into a principle of social action . . . is . . . completely foreign to his tradition, though now and then he has struck back politically when he felt that he was the victim of sectional political exploitation."

newspaper's editorial attacks these outsiders for their moral degeneracy in an issue that carries movie ads promising a display of several kinds of sodomy, while an earlier issue praises Gore Vidal's essays advocating test tube reproduction and homosexuality as the new religion. None of the principals recognize in the emaciated young the suggestions that he is the prodigal son, not the outsider, the foreigner to the South that the newspaper wishes to believe him. The life he struggles to save isn't the one he recklessly risks on his expensive motorcycle in defiance of public safety commission slogans. It is more likely the life of the spirit seeking a still point in the flux, to which neither Mrs. Rankin's pacifism, Marcuse's anarchism, nor the "establishment's" version of order speak in their formulations of man. Nor does the sheriff or the trained newspaperman sense aught but threat in the young man, judging from their indiscriminate uneasiness.*

IV

Weaver observes that "every established order writes its great apologia only after it has been fatally stricken." Although he makes specific application to the defense of the Southern position which followed immediately upon Appomattox, he is very much aware that the agonies of a dying civilization are to be observed in a span of decades and in scope larger than the South. Certainly we are as heavily engaged with a tradition at bay in 1970 as Alexander Stephens, Albert Taylor Bledsoe, or Robert Lewis Dabney were in 1870. It is one of the misfortunes of their lost cause, on a level as decisive as the South's failure to make clear a metaphysical position, that those defenders of Western Civilization outside the South have not recognized the South as ally and so have not helped it clarify its true cause before the world. One is painfully amused to notice in the reviews of Weaver's book by Northern traditionalists, for instance, a late recognition of kinships never before seen (as in the instance of John Chamberlain's review in *The Freeman*, April, 1969). And so one is tempted to venture that some of these gentlemen have been misled by political spectacle, rather than guided by metaphysical principle: they did not understand Stark

*This paradigm's appearance in the South, near the oldest state chartered university and involving some of its students, is richly ironic. But then consider with what innocent irony the latest American Nobel laureate in literature has romanticized a materialistic, rootless society in *Travels with Charlie*, the affluent society's version of the *Grapes of Wrath*. It is neither accidental nor irrelevant that Steinbeck toured America in company with a poodle.

Young's words in 1930, ". . . we defend certain qualities not because they belong to the South, but because the South belongs to them." Taking appearance for reality, the spectacle as revelation of the obscure essential, one may fail to see the typical Southern governor or senator as pragmatist between whose rhetorical stance and operative principles there lies a widening fault. Politically and economically, the Southern politician of this century is almost invariably more socialist in domestic policy than capitalist, despite the rhetorical camouflage with which he hides in the hustings. One need only review the general record of Southern congressmen from New Deal days to the present to place their typical member in the camp of the political left in home affairs—except as the politically expedient issue of race may be introduced. For the typical Southern politician has a New South, not an Old South, heritage, as Weaver's book points out: he has learned from the experiences of such men as North Carolina's pioneer governor after the Civil War, Aycock, who was elected on a white supremacy, universal education, progressive platform. The curious political aspect of the South that so puzzles other regions, one ventures, is its vestigial emotional responses to its Cavalier past, from which heritage principle is long since decayed; to these are added the appetites accentuated by the economic and political deprivations of Reconstruction. Hence perverse racism supplied energy to its progressivism—its own brand of materialism evolving therefrom. Its leaders, avowed states rights advocates who enjoy a talent for political maneuverability, could funnel federal monies into the states over the years as if no strings were attached. But since the mid-twentieth century the South has had to pay increasingly for those abandoned principles and its political duplicity. An educated, articulate spokesman for Western civilization in its Southern manifestation, such as Robert Lewis Dabney, who wrote a hundred years ago, would be appalled that such modern versions of the scalawag as we tend to elect governor or send to congress are acclaimed with righteous zeal by the Southerner. He would view with irony local battles with the modern version of the carpetbagger disguised as missionary humanitarian in the light of state and federal economic policies so closely in accord with those of the local enemy. For the epithets "pinko" on the one hand and "fascists" on the other but cloud political kinships.

The circus of Southern political and social gymnastics may be

closely and appropriately related to what goes on in the next ring, the conflict between the New Left and the "Establishment," which one will hardly distort by calling the "Old Left." That is why Weaver's book is so richly appropriate to our moment of national history. From the foundations of this country, as Weaver shows, Southern leadership was suspicious of that pervasive influence upon our destiny out of the French Revolution, which the South (in spite of Jefferson) found antipathetic because it represented "a sort of political humanism which had the effect of deifying an abstract concept of man." By the 1890's "under 'progress' the generations were becoming estranged" in the South. The young Southerner who literally built the foundation for France's famous gift, the Statue of Liberty, could also set a cartoon image of the Southern Colonel (in *Colonel Carter of Cartersville*) still dear to the Herblocks of the editorial pages and the sentimentalists of the comic strips and TV series. The belated attempt of the Southern apologists to withstand both industrialism's exploitation of body and soul and secularism's triumphant creed of avarice had failed, leaving largely an emotional residue.

But emotions are respirations of spirit in the world. If their function is erratic, the diagnosis is not necessarily a failure of their vital sources. Perhaps there is an allergic reaction, and the suffering subject, if it does not succumb, becomes acutely aware of an unhealthy state. This is to say that the human spirit may be violated, but not indefinitely. It cannot abide hypocrisy, even when it cannot say the word in all its particulars. The Democratic party, which threw the South a life-raft in the 1870's, is shocked to see the South vote for Goldwater, a Republican. It is subsequently shocked, after appropriations of public money for public property in the name of Lincoln's "of . . . by . . . for the people," to see some of those people entrench on national malls or burn public buildings with the defense that these belong to a free people who may, because they are free, do with their own property what they please.

Weaver's examination of the Southern apologia is most instructive on the causes out of which such recent emotional disorders develop. That Southern defense, after the fact of military and political defeat, concentrated on principles considered valid in spite of their having been overcome by force. A faith in the validity of those principles would not allow the apologist to accept it as decided that God was on the

side of cannon or votes, which between 1865 and the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment were synonymous. He, helpless to all effect, looked to a vindication by history. Such spokesmen as Bledsoe, Stephens, and Dabney enunciated those principles as the South's legacy to the future, of a character larger than regional. The Vice-President of the Confederacy, for instance, anticipated eventual vindication as a result of the general subjection of a whole people to the new principle he called "Empire"—centralization—within which system both agent and subject alike were to be reduced to the abstraction of number. We observe in retrospect that, the sovereignty of locality long since overthrown, a new principle has emerged from the general revolt against the predicted "Empire": the sovereignty of the individual. The principle is a radical throwback to the beginnings of civilization out of which community slowly emerged.* And its catastrophic prospect in operation, the cause of our panic, is that it makes helpless the technological sophistication of that Empire which the South held suspect long ago. Draft-card burners and computer burners, operating as they contend upon moral principles of individual sovereignty, are difficult to debate, but only partially because they lack a metaphysics. Man deified, the logical extension is that each man is his own god. And Dabney predicted, in 1867, that the South would be sadly vindicated by "the anarchy and woe" which the "disorganizing heresies" of the victorious North were imposing upon the South. A son of the New South, Woodrow Wilson, in abandoning the South, observed: "It is evident that empire is an affair of strong government, and not of the nice and somewhat artificial poise or of the delicate compromises of structure and authority characteristic of a mere federal partnership."** He was to go on from there to a further enlargement in his battle for the League of Nations, unable finally to make it an instrument of empire, even in the name of peace.

What the estranged younger generation managed to forget in the South by the turn of the century was an old knowledge, obscured by such spectacles as Joe Wheeler at San Juan Hill shouting, "The Yankees are running! Damn it! I mean the Spaniards!" What they forgot was

*Perhaps this is what Hillary Rodham, 1969 Valedictorian at Wellesley, notices when she says, "There's a very strange conservative strain that goes through a lot of New Left, collegiate protests that I find very intriguing because it harks back to a lot of old virtues, to the fulfillment of original ideas" (Quoted in *Life*, June 20, 1969).

**"Reconstruction of the Southern States," *Atlantic Monthly*, January, 1901

the effect of empire upon the individual. But all had not forgotten. In *The Leopard's Spots*, published the year after Wilson's arguments for "empire as an affair of strong government," Thomas Dixon has a character say:

I hate the dishwater of modern world citizenship. A shallow cosmopolitanism is the mask of death for the individual. It is the froth of civilization, as crime is its dregs. The true citizen of the world loves his country.

Dixon clearly means "loves his country through its regional aspect." The wisdom from our distance is impressive if Dixon's art is not, as the themes of the greater writers who succeed him, particularly those of the "Lost Generation," show.*

V

One of the South's legacies as a region has been a keen sense of history through which such prophecies as Dabney's or the Reverend Mr. Durham's, or Richard Weaver's are made possible. It has been instinctively committed as well to a metaphysical, as opposed to an empirical, concern for cause and effect in its view of history. That is why, as Weaver points out, it could counter Locke's assertion that "Man is free by nature" with the aphorism from Aristotle, "man is a tyrant by nature." It could sense, and sometimes argue, that Plato's abstract metaphysical concern for the irreconcilable One and Many occurred at a point of dissolution of the concrete Many—the Greek states. Not only ideas, but events out of ideas have consequences. The South was aware that Alexander waited in the wings. Reading Suetonius, it discerned in the elevation of Augustus to Godhead the prospect of his successors. Reading Shakespeare, it could make a distinction between the arguments for the divine right of kings and

*Dixon has another character in the same work anticipate the future effect of those disorganizing heresies that flourished at the turn of the century, the "anarchy and woe" which Dabney had spoken of thirty-five years earlier. The Reverend Mr. Durham, refusing an invitation to the larger, cosmopolitan world of Boston, says to a Boston Deacon, who is enticing him to a higher and broader calling, "Against a possible day when a flood of foreign anarchy threatens the foundations of the Republic and men shall laugh at the faiths of your fathers, and undigested wealth beyond the dreams of avarice rots your society until it mocks at honor, love, and God—against that day we will preserve the South."

despotic abuses of office. It did not make haste to substitute the secular right "each man his own king," fearing an elected One as the greater despotism. Any elevated One as symbol of All in the political arena is a fatal illusion as Alexander Stephens saw it, inevitably contradicted by the particularism of persons and places. If particularism is at first overcome by a superior force, as was gradually accomplished between 1830 and 1930, it will eventually burst out.

Yet, given our development toward political monism out of egalitarianism, we have continued to pay homage to particularism through metaphor. We prefer the illusion, as when we embrace an analogy of our national political arena to the New England town meeting, in spite of the unsettling events of the recent Chicago convention. We might as easily, and perhaps more appropriately, consider our social and political condition analogous to the infamous plantation, given the pyramid of our national "power structure." With a decisive difference: the new plantation is magnified to include and extinguish time and place, and so destroy the old piety which was the climate of manners through which one acknowledged the influence of particularism upon abstraction.

The intimacies of person and place in the old society did not obviate those larger concerns such as the uses of economic and political power, but they were at least a brake upon the evils of the inevitable hierarchy for which no civilizing alternative has been discovered.* On the other hand, the "plantation" or "town meeting" when magnified beyond the possibility of conception by the generality, requires a mystical devotion to an abstract political and social world. Such enlargement must create its own version of moonlight and magnolias or maple syrup and birches. A new piety is synthetically elicited to replace the old piety, which at least required an acknowledgment of the limiting effects of human nature and the natural world upon

*The student confrontation with the multiversity daily evidences the point. We have moved from the professor on one end of the log, the student on the other, into a world where there is no log, where both float free. The dictations of supply and demand in the profession of teaching, where there has existed for some years a "seller's market," the easy access of portable grants and the multiplication of fringe benefits in the fierce administrative bidding have made everything available to teacher and student, except the log—the classroom, a still place within which minds only move.

human institutions.* The Union, the symbol of a political Arianism, has become the moonlight and magnolias to a social and political religion which assumes absolute moral imperative. But the body and blood are long absent from our secular, mobile, materialistic togetherness. The borrowed signs of an older order which were at first used to consolidate and manage collective force against opposition to progressive destiny in the Gilded Age—the apple pie and motherhood of particularism borrowed to give abstract nationalism an identity—have long since become stage properties for political rhetoricians. They have seemed discredited by sophist usage on the one hand and by the assault upon them by a more vigorous adversary on the other, the socialist invasion of the idea of union. “The socialist premise that patriotism is but a nickname for prejudice,” as Weaver says, led to the desperate defense of patriotism by such people as Tom Watson, with the result that prejudices were dignified as patriotism. (The latest occurrence of that confusion centered around George Wallace in the last election.)

When advertising has abused its materials to the confusion of patrons and consumers, its final attempt upon its audience is to satirize its own position. Ennui follows a mild tiltillation, whether the product be cigarette or patriotism. It has been made increasingly difficult for one to love his home, his place. And the embarrassed flippancy with which one makes a stand in favor of the particulars of his devoir is strikingly pathetic, while the solemn rhetorical enumeration of them from a variety of podia is irritating. Still, that hunger surfaces and longs for expression as honest sentiment; in a very real sense, the flower children's actions are sometimes efforts to find expression to replace apple pie and motherhood, to establish a sense of being out of elementary nature close at hand, and so more acceptable than the vague social and po-

*Daniel Moynihan, addressing the graduating class at Notre Dame in 1969, said: "We are not especially well equipped in conceptual terms to ride out the storm ahead. . . . The stability of democracy depends very much on the people making a careful distinction between what government can do and what it cannot do. . . . It cannot provide values to persons who have none, or who have lost those they had. It cannot provide a meaning to life. It cannot provide inner peace. It can provide outlets for moral energies, but it cannot create those energies. In particular, government cannot cope with the crisis in values which is sweeping the Western world. It cannot respond to the fact that so many of our young people do not believe what those before them have believed, do not accept the authority of institutions and customs whose authority has heretofore been accepted, do not embrace or even very much like the culture that they inherit" (Quoted in *Life*, June 20, 1969).

litical transcendentalism of the twentieth century that dissolves persons into a secular political oversoul.*

VI

The Southerner's attention to place and to the history of place dwells heavily upon the concrete particular, especially upon the particulars of persons. He tends to be a story teller rather than a speculator in the abstractions of science or social theory. The Eastern joke that Mississippi has more writers than people who can read is truer than intended; but it might be more properly put that it has more bards among the unlettered than any comparable region out of the South, lettered or unlettered. The Southern bardic mind reflects upon what was, with a familiar intimacy which makes it firsthand, and his speculative interest in what will be seldom escapes into abstract systems of contingency. Family chronicle, enlarged and distorted in its accretions by the heart's desire, embodies not only a sense of what is meet and right in human relations but a sense of the perversity of human nature as well. The bardic mind maintains a sense of community out of the convergence of families, within which convergence the variety of humanity finds tolerable habitation, eccentric, and common folk alike. It is a mind to which tragedy and comedy, the absurdities of human grandeur and meanness, are congenial. But seldom is it sympathetic to the modern pathos of displacement, the self-torturing spiritual masochism called pursuit of identity. The bardic mind, that is, does not take J.

*In relation to this point, it is interesting to notice correspondence between the Southern position as we have it represented by the Agrarians and new solutions to domestic problems currently in the ascendancy on the Left. Norman Mailer, in his candidacy for mayor of New York City, advocated a form of states rights—neighborhood rights. He would have New York City granted statehood, then "some *real* power given to the neighborhoods." He advocates "vest-pocket campuses" built by students out of the ruins, not a condition foreign to the Southern soldier-student after 1865. "We'll have compulsory attendance at church on Sunday in those that vote for that." The neighborhood will have power "to decide about the style and quality and number of the police force they want and are willing to pay for. . . ." Perhaps Mailer will call his new state "The Thirteen Original Neighborhoods." Meanwhile Jane Jacobs, editor of *Architectural Forum*, wants to work toward restoring facsimile versions of old neighborhoods—Greenwich Village for example. She is for the advantages of "a muddle of oddments" to the city, by which she means diversity of enterprise such as advocated by the Agrarians in relation to land usage. She will come closer to success with the creation of organizations—Daughters of the New York Revolution or United Daughters of Confederate Neighborhoods. Meanwhile Abraham Ribicoff and Orville Freeman introduce Agrarian arguments as possible solution to the urban problem. It would seem, indeed, that *I'll Take My Stand* may prove of considerable consequence in the final years of this century, and one may even live to hear Justice William O. Douglas or John Kenneth Galbraith raise questions as to the bad effects of TVA on natural and human resources.

Alfred Prufrock seriously. (It is apparent I trust that one finds the bardic mind in the South at the supper table and on the front porch of an evening before he finds it displayed in books. The Southern writer, to the extent that he may be so identified, is almost invariably fed by this anonymous bardic mind.)

The Southern mind which Weaver addresses is a religious, poetic mind in which the concrete is a center for acceptance of the mystery surrounding the concrete. Mystery is accepted, not analyzed. Indeed, Southern suspicion of abstract, analytical thought was and is a distinct liability, a point Weaver emphasizes heavily. As he shows, it made difficult any systematic defense of the Southern cause in the 1850's that might have persuasively engaged political and economic principles, a failure that allowed the grounds of the ensuing conflict to be shifted from vital principles to the indefensible incident of slavery.* One of Weaver's points is that we are busily repeating that failure to engage issues of principle through the instruments of logic. We thus allow a radical and political and social dissolution to carry all opposition before it under the emotionally persuasive banner of social justice, with the result that chaos is dictated. The consequence is that order will next be dictated in the name of freedom, but with the effective destruction of freedom as it results.** Only since Weaver's death, with the emergence of Black Supremacy as an active force out of the confused thinking of humanitarianism, has it become possible to examine critically that generous, abstract cause in which person is destroyed. So it is that Weaver's study stands us in good stead. For, in spite of our inherent weakness, the suspicion of abstract thought has virtues which Weaver eloquently defends. Suspicion alone is not so effective as the reasoned presentation of grounds for suspicion, but in its opposition to possibly fatal contingency it is better than no opposition at all.

*This was a point Lord Acton had effectively made before the yeomen farmers and mountain boys got home from Appomattox. "If, then, slavery is to be the criterion which shall determine the significance of the civil war, our verdict ought, I think, to be, that by one part of the nation it was wickedly defended, and by the other as wickedly removed. Different indeed must our judgment be if we examine the value of secession as a phase in the history of political doctrine." Lord Acton's words are from "The Civil War in America: Its Place in History," a lecture given January 18, 1866.

**Notice the respectful hearing given Gore Vidal's *Reflections Upon A Sinking Ship*, a collection of essays which ends with "A Manifesto" asserting "an Authority must be created with the power to control human population, to redistribute food . . . begin the systematic breaking up of the cities into smaller units . . ." etc., but "The Authority may not have the power or right to regulate the private lives of citizens." One can but shake his head sadly at the illogic.

The Southern Tradition at Bay, then, may be said to speak to and for those of us who seek a spokesman for human dignity within the necessities of human community. Weaver is hopeful, for instance, when he remarks that the South's long persistence in "regarding science as a false messiah" led her to distrust technology, even when forced by the economics of defeat at the hands of a temporary "Gained Cause" to succumb to technology. For the South exhibited, and still to some extent exhibits, an "astonishing resistance to the insidious doctrines of relativism and empiricism."^{*} Science of the sort Weaver means, and its stepchild technology, assume nature and human nature an enemy to be overthrown and reconstituted. Its ascendancy is everywhere and by all observers remarked, usually with apologetic justification but without sufficient regard for its contingent consequences. Thus the power of the atom makes possible a plutonium 238 battery embedded to regulate heartbeat, while we worry over the accommodations for the aged so that they will not be a burden on family mobility. But against this progress in prolonging life an undercurrent moves, insisting upon the old dignity of death, the tribute life owes nature, as poets have always insisted whether celebrated as pied beauty or lamented as the arrogance of Time. That undercurrent of unrest is at last more general than a Southern suspicion. The mad scientist once made respectable by his product—genetic manipulations for better beans and meatier hogs—begins to appear with a wild, wild look in his eye. The prospects for super-intelligence bred in test tubes is fascinating. Naturally the breeding of a superrace, as Batman would say, is for Good and against Evil (as Hitler argued too), besides which such progress is shaded by Jeffersonian egalitarianism and hence palatable: we are used to say "To each according to his merit, within the bounds of nature," and we are but extending the bounds of nature. Still, that Southern suspicion asks, whose are the bounds when nature is annihilated and the powers ascribed to Providence are assumed by the geneticist.

Contingent effects that are unfortunate restore some confidence in both nature and Providence; piety after all may prove a valuable principle cherished and kept alive in the South till more generally

*A suspicion not reflected, incidentally, in so august a figure of the thinker as Emerson, who out of the pressures of the new science moving into seats of power in government after 1865 abandoned transcendentalism to justify the illusive doctrine of Progress. On this point, see Fredrickson's *Inner Civil War*.

needed. The progressivist world's fascination with process, a Renaissance heritage that runs through history with childish innocence, may necessarily be tempered by a respect for both the elements of nature and a prospect of ends—old considerations out of medieval thought. With the Renaissance we turned from "simples" to "compounds," from arsenic or hemlock to the elaborate formulae of congregated poisons, which we with our technical skills now recognize as mutually nullifying. The legendary Borgia poisons, as we look back on them, seem quaint and foolish and ineffective, to speak nothing of antidotes to them, though both were accidentally and not intentionally so. How quaint and amusing the chief scientist of his day, Giambattista della Porta of Naples, with his remedy to whiten teeth—until we compare it with our own remedies dramatized by commercials. And his Antidote to Venom, a universal protection, is the wonder drug of his day:

Take three pounds of old oil and two handfuls of St. John's Wort. . . . Macerate for two months in the sun. Strain off the old flowers, and add two ounces of fresh. Boil in Balneo . . . for six hours. Put in a close-stopped bottle and keep in the sun for fifteen days. During July, add three ounces of St. John's Wort seed which gently has been stamped and steeped in two glasses of white wine for three days. Add also two drachms each of gentian, tormentil, dittany, zeodary, and carline, (all of which must have been gathered in August,) sandalwood and long-aristolochie. Gently boil for six hours in Balneo Mariae. Strain in a press. Add to the expression one ounce of saffron, myrrh, aloes, spikenard, and rhubarb, all bruised. Boil for a day in Balneo Mariae. Add two ounces each of treacle and mithridate. Boil for six hours in Balneo Mariae. And set it in the sun for forty days. . . . It will work wonders.*

Quaint and amusing, until we compare some of our own solutions to our problems. For now intention and accident are more alarmingly confusing to us. The Tennessee Valley Authority, which appropriated land for lakes to provide electrical power, displacing many settled people, soon turned to coal instead of waterpower. It contaminated the air to the extent that it has recently awarded contracts totaling several million dollars for limestone to be used in testing an air pollution control process to counteract the tons of sulfur dioxide released into the country air. At the moment there are mild alarms from New York and New Jersey congressmen over the prospect of their states' acting

*Quoted by Fredrick Baron Corvo, in "The Legend of the Borgia Venom," *Chronicles of the House of Borgia*. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1962, pp. 234-235.

as way stations for the disposal of World War I nerve gas, now obsolete but non-disposable. (The suggested throw-away cartons are two old "liberty" ships to be sunk in the Atlantic.) With some mild relief and in compensation (such are the uses of Emerson), we cite the return of inhabitants to the Bikini atolls, though noting an indefinite period before life can be supported independently there. Daily there are demonstrations against science as false messiah in its military aspect. Research projects bearing upon defenses are excoriated by the young who enjoy the pleasures of the pill without being equally disturbed by the prospects of blood clots. Only very slowly are we waking to the inherent long-range, inclusive dangers of combination drugs, despite our occasional excitement over minor accidents such as thalidomide's role in a rash of birth defects—besides which, that was in Germany.

The extent to which the South has succumbed to the new messiah, as anticipated by spokesmen for the South after Appomattox, may be symptomatically present in the complacent reception of such warnings as Rachel Carson's. After all, we have had a bad bollweevil problem. If we overcome the screwworm more sanely than the bollweevil, very well: the main point is to get rid of the two pests. So then what is the cost factor in spraying fire ants by plane? In money we mean. And isn't it interesting, the control of the mosquito with DDT—but whatever happened to the shrimp and crab life along the coast? As I write a scientist of reputation testifies before a senate committee on intergovernmental relations that technology is seriously flawed because of its short-sighted violations of nature, that it may indeed destroy irreparably the natural capital of mankind—environment and people—"probably within the next 50 years." His testimony is reported in my evening paper as a human interest story, a filler buried amidst advertising of technology's good things. ("Got any bees in your trees? Call Orkin," a billboard says.) In the same paper another human interest story: a Berkeley lecturer on architecture warns an Atlanta audience that Seattle has "wrecked the city with freeways" and insists that man's principal enemy is technology unbridled by humanity. Urban renewal, in the name of humanity, but with what contingent effects upon humanity? The same paper addresses urban renewal and the freeway problems in its editorials as if clustered apartments and four-lane highways were virtues of the city's soul without effects upon its body. It becomes increasingly exercised over symptoms,

publishing devastating pictures of clogged and polluted streams while ignoring the washing machine in our basement or the burden of the throw-away bottle. Thus a metaphor for our concern over problems from pollution to student unrest.

After the re-education which this book represents, Richard Weaver went on in *Ideas Have Consequences* to characterize our chaos as the result of a conception of life as *practice* without *theory*, whose problems are met repeatedly by *ad hoc* policies that reject nature and history as bearing upon the present and future. The inevitable effect upon society as we know it in twentieth-century America is that we are managed by the complicated machinery of order but not by order itself. Thus the paradoxical situation: the "establishment" is itself the purveyor of disorder, as Dabney predicted, whether one look to its national, state, or local machinery. For the very machinery of society is the principal source of and cause of our disorder, despite its contradictory disguise. Such is the inevitable situation out of the ascendancy of a Gained Cause now decaying about us, a cause whose dominant stance has become that provincialism which, as Allen Tate observed, begins each day as if there were no yesterday. Such an *ad hoc* philosophy, the eternal unexamined principle of youth, endears the child's words and actions to us in our sentimental reminiscent moments. But when a nation becomes as old as ours has since 1776, it must put aside the child's speech and understanding and thought. When it does not, its children will not refrain from pointing to the parading emperors *au nature*. That is their brand of *ad hoc* policy, learned of their fathers; it is the "issue-oriented" reaction one expects when issues are not profoundly read as to radical causes.

There are many ways of pointing the finger at naked truth. One may do so as directly as do Aristophanes or Petronius. Or by disrobing in demonstrations while shouting "obscene" words (once elements of acceptable discourse, as Chaucer and Dante demonstrate).^{*} Or one may effectively and carefully explicate history and art as Richard Weaver does. His finger-pointing is not spectacular; it is a logical and persuasive examination of some of the causes of our chaos.

*Satire is scarcely possible in literary mode in an age where absurdity is so vast as to prevent enlargement. Thus the most effective satire is spontaneous public action, which commandeers a public audience against its will where once the audience sought the satire. The theatrical variety of demonstrations and happenings makes my point. The obscene word or public nakedness proving insufficient, public fornication has become the latest fad.

From such reflection, principles may emerge which make understandable such diverse symptoms of society's disease as polluted streams and student unrest. His work, as he is careful to say, is finally larger in its concerns than "Southern" history; it will help keep alive ideas of healthful consequence toward that day when we, young and old alike, return to careful reading and thinking. This is a point in the future, hopefully short of science's allotted fifty years. It is a point when we may, in Eliot's words,

arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.

Meanwhile it must be said as a minimum that anyone professing a serious concern with the social, political, and cultural aspects of American civilization, particularly that of the past and present South, is obligated to read *The Southern Tradition at Bay*—with his "Whig" conditioning suspended.